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ABSTRACT

In much work on French prosody, at least two distinct levels of constituency above the word are assumed:

- ❖ the accentual phrase (AP; also phonological phrase PP)
- ❖ the intonational phrase (IP)

While there is much agreement about the definition and the realization of the AP, the IP is more controversial.

We propose that two types of IP exist in French, depending on the interface constraints that govern the mapping between the semantico-pragmatic, morpho-syntactic and phonological structures.:

- 1) The 'syntactic IP'
- 2) The 'informational IP'

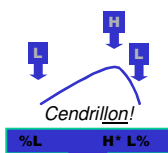
BACKGROUND

The IP in prosodic theory

Various types of linguistic information interact to determine IP-formation: (Selkirk 2005)

- ❖ Syntactic, e.g. Root clauses, embedded coordinated clauses, left- and right-peripheral constituents, and incidental constituents project IP boundaries:
[Peter learns French]_{IP} [and Mary watches TV]_{IP}
[Peter]_{IP} [he will never learn French]_{IP}
- ❖ Semantic, e.g. Focus distribution
[J'ai acheté du chocolat.]_{IP} [au supermarché.]_{IP}
- ❖ Phonological e.g. Constituent length
... but also performance factors (speech rate etc)

An Autosegmental-Metrical transcription

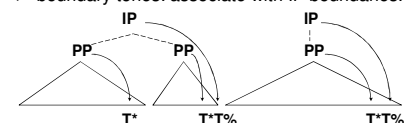


- ❖ The tonal and phrasal structures are closely intertwined

French phrasing and intonation: Tonal distribution

The inventory of contrastive intonation contours in French can be analysed in terms of

- ❖ pitch accents: associate with metrically strong syllables (T*) in AP/PP
- ❖ boundary tones: associate with IP boundaries.



Mais la petite Laure aurait su parce qu'elle est intelligente
But little Laure would have known, because she's intelligent'

(Post 2000, but also Delais-Roussarie 1994, Jun and Fougeron 2000), cf. DiCristo and Hirst 1996

- ❖ The PP is the domain of pitch accent distribution: morpho-syntax, metrical structure and constituent length interact to determine pitch accent placement within the PP

(Post 1999; cf. Verluuyten 1982, Delais 1994)

OUR PROPOSAL

There are two types of IP, distinguishable on the basis of

- a) their mapping relations with the syntactic and semantic/pragmatic structures:

- 1) The 'informational IP', primarily defined by the information structure
- 2) The 'syntactic IP', defined by the morpho-syntactic structure

The mapping constraints operate at an underlying phonological level; whether boundaries surface as major breaks depends on choices made in other parts of the grammar as well as on performance factors (e.g. speaking rate)

- b) the inventory of intonation contours available at their right edges:

- 1) the full inventory of IP-final tonal configurations is available for 'informational' IPs (see below)
- 2) 'syntactic' IPs only take rising configurations.

TWO TYPES OF INTONATION PHRASES

The 'syntactic' Intonation Phrase

IP boundaries align with the right edges of certain syntactic constituents, such as:

- ❖ Root clauses (obligatory)
[Pierre dort]_{IP} [et Marie regarde la télé]_{IP}
[Peter sleeps]_{IP} [and Mary watches TV]_{IP}
- ❖ Embedded coordinated clauses
[Je crois que Pierre dort]_{IP} [et Marie regarde la télé]_{IP}
[I think Peter sleeps]_{IP} [and Mary watches TV]_{IP}
- ❖ Left- and right-peripheral constituents
[Pierre]_{IP} [il ne regarde jamais la télé]_{IP}
[Peter]_{IP} [he never watches TV]_{IP}
- ❖ Incidental constituents
[Pierre]_{IP} [je crois]_{IP} [dort]_{IP}
[Peter]_{IP} [I think]_{IP} [sleeps]_{IP}

➡ The location of the IP boundary is determined by morpho-syntax alone.

The 'informational' Intonation Phrase

IP boundaries align with the right edges of informational focus constituents: (e.g. Beysade et al. 2005)

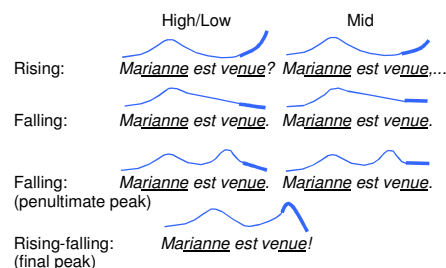
- ❖ All focus: *What happened?*
[J'ai acheté du chocolat au supermarché.]_{IP}
'I bought chocolate at the supermarket'
- ❖ Narrow focus: *What did you buy today?*
[J'ai acheté du chocolat.]_{IP} [au supermarché.]_{IP}
➡ The focus constituents are congruent with syntactic structure

Distribution of IP-final configurations

	IP-final	Non-final
Rising	IP _{INFO} and IP _{SYNT}	AP (PP) and IP _{SYNT}
Falling	IP _{INFO} only	—
Falling (from penult)	IP _{INFO} only	—
Rising-falling (final peak)	IP _{INFO} only	—

INVENTORY OF IP-FINAL CONTRASTS

Intonational contrasts: IP-final movements

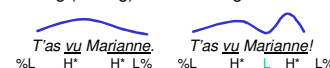


IP-final contrasts: Some AM transcriptions

Rise versus rise-fall:



Rising (-falling) versus falling: extra L-tone



CONCLUSIONS

Tonal structure is tightly constrained by phrasing at different levels of Prosodic Hierarchy:

- ❖ Location of pitch accents and boundary tones is restricted by mappings between morpho-syntactic, semantic/informational, metrical and intonational structure
- ❖ Choice of intonation patterns is restricted by resulting prosodic structure

Questions:

- ❖ To what extent can this help model intonational phrasing cross-linguistically (with different relative weights for interface constraints)?
- ❖ Is tonal choice further constrained by position of IP boundary in root sentence?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Can the distribution of IP boundary tones be accounted for on the basis of similar interactions between interface constraints?

- ❖ What is the role for morpho-syntax?
- ❖ How does semantics constrain IP-formation?
- ❖ How does IP-formation constrain the tonal structure?

Acknowledgments
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